

# **Barnsley Governors Association 2014: Annual General Meeting**

## **Report of the Executive Committee**

### **Introduction**

The Association has now been working for three years, a period of great growth and expansion. This annual report sets out what has been achieved in the last twelve months and where the BGA finds itself at the end of its initial phase of development. The Executive Committee has continued to meet monthly throughout the year to develop ways of supporting governance in Barnsley, focusing as ever on the BGA's Aims and a set of priorities drawn up at the start of the year.

### **Aims and Priorities**

Following the 2013 AGM the Executive Committee reviewed the previous year's priorities and developed seven priorities for 2014. Each Committee member took responsibility for work towards at least one of them. The priorities and a summary of what has been achieved for each are set out below:

#### **Ensure the continued success of the BGA by maintaining membership of at least 90% of Barnsley governing bodies, recruiting new members to the Executive Committee and succession planning of the BGA's officers.**

Almost all Barnsley school governing bodies are members (only one secondary and eight primary bodies are not).

One new member has joined the Executive Committee, which intends to make strenuous efforts to recruit more in the coming year. Succession plans have been put in place to ensure that the key roles in the Association are fulfilled.

#### **Hold two conferences open to all governors, which inform and stimulate governors, and provide opportunity for sharing of knowledge, skills and experience.**

An early summer conference was very successfully held, with two excellent speakers, participants were extremely positive in their feedback. The AGM is again being used this year as an occasion for a second shorter conference. All the presentations from the conferences are made widely available via the website.

#### **Develop the website, monthly newsletter and other means to provide governors and governing bodies with relevant, reliable and up to date information for governors, a means of sharing of knowledge, skills and experience, and effective two way communication.**

Throughout the year the website has been kept up to date, and improvements made. Together with the monthly newsletters, the website remains the principal means of the BGA providing up to date relevant information to its members. An update report on the BGA's activities is made available termly for governing body meetings.

#### **Represent governors in an informed way to ensure that their voice is heard, by maintaining a strong relationship with the local authority and other stakeholders, and as members of various committees and forums, in particular the Barnsley Challenge Board.**

Officers of the BGA have continued to hold regular meetings with a range of senior officers and members of the local authority. The BGA is represented on the Barnsley Challenge Board, and has successfully argued for wider representation of governors on the Board.

**Identify the training and development needs of governors and work with the local authority and other providers and stakeholders to meet those needs through training, mentoring, peer review and other means.**

For a second year the BGA commissioned governor training from external providers and its own members, with the aim of providing ‘training for governors by governors’. All the BGA’s courses are intended to complement the training sessions offered by the local authority. Over 100 governors from 35 schools attended BGA training programmes during the last academic year and their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In addition two governor roadshows were held in collaboration with the LA.

A training programme for 2014/15 has been developed and launched, and work progresses on developing a peer mentoring programme.

Increasingly governors and governing bodies are seeking independent advice from the BGA and wherever possible, officers either offer that advice or seek to point enquirers in the right direction to find answers to their questions.

**Support governing bodies seeking to develop partnership and collaboration with other governing bodies, particularly in relation to the procurement of services.**

The BGA supports schools who seek to collaborate more closely with each other whether in a formal or informal arrangement. During the course of the year, as a result of an initial meeting on a BGA course, the Chairs and Vice Chairs of a group of 10 primary schools have met on several occasions to seek ways of providing mutual support and collaboration. Further meetings are planned in the next school year. A member of the BGA executive also attends in his role as Vice Chair of a participating school.

**Review the appropriateness of the BGA’s legal status and consider changes.**

Unfortunately progress on this has been very slow. The Executive is concerned to ensure that the structure created three years ago is still appropriate for the Association in the light of the way that it has developed and grown, and will continue to pursue this matter.

**Thanks**

The BGA’s success is due to the efforts of many people. In particular, the Executive would like to record its continued thanks to the local authority for its strong support, working closely with the BGA to develop ways of supporting governors that make best use of the authority’s and Association’s resources and expertise. Thanks are also due to Barnsley College whose support for the BGA’s conferences has greatly contributed to their success.

**Conclusion**

The Executive Committee to be elected at the 2014 AGM will develop a new plan and priorities for the year ahead, taking account of the rapidly changing educational scene and the increasing demands and pressures on governance and governors. The current Committee is confident that the Association is in a very strong position, able to continue making a significant impact on governance by supporting and representing governors, and thereby making a significant contribution to school improvement in Barnsley.

*Michael Sanderson, Chair*

*Margaret Gostelow, Secretary*